

**Testimony for the Appropriations Committee  
Funding for the Connecticut Mental Health Center**

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Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am writing testimony in support of funding for the Connecticut Mental Health Center. The proposed \$947,000 in funding cuts will further compromise a system already stretched thin. Past cuts have resulted in the closing of outpatient clinics and transitional housing units, resulting in less access to essential mental health care for some of our community's most vulnerable members. Cuts negatively impact the educational mission at CMHC. Loss of funding translates to fewer training positions – positions that recruit the next generation of public sector psychiatrists, psychologists, and other licensed therapists. The Public Psychiatry Fellowship has attracted psychiatrists to Connecticut for the exact purpose of caring for underserved populations. These cuts place such training opportunities at risk, ultimately limiting resources not just in the present, but for years to come.

I have had the privilege of working at CMHC. In my second year of training, I cared for patients admitted to the hospital. Those 3 months were fundamental to my becoming the clinician I am today. I witnessed staff giving hope to those who had all but lost an understanding of hope. I heard stories of loss and tragedy peeled away, giving rise to resiliency and purpose. The staff and trainees at CMHC never walk through the front door simply because it is their job. Rather, they arrive each morning because it is their calling. A call to aid those in pain, be it physical or emotional; to offer compassion and understanding when others have turned a blind eye. We have an important decision to make in the next several weeks. I'm here to advocate for the well-being of my patients, but they are not just my patients. They are your neighbors, your friends, your family, your constituents – they are people. In making our decision about this budget, will we embrace the better elements of our humanity? Or will we turn a blind eye?

I deeply thank the Senators and Representatives for their time and consideration of my testimony.